REMARKS

Claims 11-42 are pending in the present application.

Claims 1-10 have been previously canceled without prejudice.

Claims 11-16, 18, 27-32, and 34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over EP 425,405
A2 to James et al. ("James") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,459,656 to Fields et al. ("Fields") and

in further view of "The keys to the enterprise: integrated applications drive information systems

to new horizons - enterprise wide integration" to Dusty Rhodes ("Rhodes").

Claims 17, 19-26, 33, 35-37, and 39-42 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over

James in view of Fields and Rhodes and in further view of "Dun & Bradstreet Software Delivers

Sales and Promotion System to Manufacturers" to Frank O. Smith ("Smith").

Applicant respectfully submits that all of Applicant's arguments are without prejudice or

disclaimer. In addition, Applicant has merely discussed example distinctions from the cited

prior art. Other distinctions may exist, and as such, Applicant reserves the right to discuss these

additional distinctions in a future Response or on Appeal, if appropriate. Applicant further

respectfully submits that by not responding to additional statements made by the Examiner,

Applicant does not acquiesce to the Examiner's additional statements. The example distinctions

discussed by Applicant are considered sufficient to overcome the Examiner's rejections.

Lee is Invalid as Prior Art Over the Subject Application

Applicant thanks the Examiner for withdrawing Lee as prior art and acknowledging that

 $\it Lee$  is not properly citable as prior art under 35 U.S.C.  $\S$  103, over the subject Application.

CLAIM OBJECTIONS:

Applicant thanks the Examiner for withdrawing the objection to Claims 11-25.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112:

Applicant thanks the Examiner for withdrawing the rejection of Claims 11-26 under 35

U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 101:

Applicant thanks the Examiner for withdrawing the rejection of Claims 11-42 under 35

U.S.C. § 101.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a):

Claims 11-16, 18, 27-32, and 34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over James in

view of Fields and in further view of Rhodes. Claims 17, 19-26, 33, 35-37, and 39-42 stand

rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over James in view of Fields and Rhodes and in further view

of Smith.

Applicant respectfully submits that James, Fields, or Rhodes, either individually or in

combination, fail to disclose, teach, or suggest each and every element of Claims 11-16, 18, 27-32,

and 34. Applicant further respectfully submits that James, Fields, Rhodes, or Smith, either

individually or in combination, fail to disclose, teach, or suggest each and every element of Claims

17, 19-26, 33, 35-37, and 39-42. Thus, Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiners obvious rejection of Claims 11-42 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over the proposed combination of *James*.

Fields, Rhodes, or Smith, either individually or in combination.

The proposed James-Fields-Rhodes-Smith Combination Fails to Teach, or Suggest Various

A computer-implemented system for managing data associated with

Limitations Recited in Applicant's Claims

For example, with respect to independent Claim 11, this claim recites:

available-to-promise (ATP) products, comprising:

a memory operable to store a hierarchy of at least two seller models that each represent a seller for one or more products, each product being associated with a product forecast model representing:

forecasted sales of the product through the seller;

planned supply of the product;

customer orders for the product through the seller; and

pre-allocated supply of the product to the seller, the pre-allocated supply being a supply of the product that has been pre-allocated to the seller for promising to subsequent customer orders for the product through the seller, the pre-allocation of the supply of the product to the seller occurring prior to distribution of the pre-allocated supply of the product to the seller; and

a processor coupled with the memory and operable to:

compute the amount of the product that is ATP at a seller according to at least the planned supply of the product, the customer orders for the product through the seller, the pre-allocated supply of the product to the seller, and the amount of the product that is ATP at one or more other sellers at a higher level in a seller hierarchy. (Emphasis Added).

In addition, *James*, *Fields*, *Rhodes*, or *Smith*, either individually or in combination fail to disclose each and every limitation of dependent Claims 19, 27, and 35.

## The Office Action Acknowledges that *James* Fails to Disclose Various Limitations Recited in Applicant's Claims

Applicant respectfully submits that the Office Action acknowledges, and Applicant agrees, that James fails to disclose various limitations recited in independent Claim 11. Specifically the Examiner acknowledges that James fails to disclose "two seller models that each represent a seller for one or more products each product being associated with a product forecast model; and forecasted sales of the product through the seller". (6 February 2008 Office Action, Page 3). (Emphasis Added). However, the Examiner asserts that the cited portions of Fields disclose the acknowledged shortcomings in James. Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's assertions regarding the subject matter disclosed in Fields.

Applicant respectfully submits that Fields fails to disclose, teach, or suggest independent Claim 11 limitations regarding a "memory operable to store a hierarchy of at least two seller models that each represent a seller for one or more products, each product being associated with a product forecast model representing [....] forecasted sales of the product through the seller". In particular, the Examiner states:

With regard to the 35 U.S.C. 103 rejections, the applicants argue that Fields does not teach "at least two seller models that each represent a seller for one or more products" wherein each product is associated with a "product forecast model". However, Fields clearly discloses two seller models (Fields: Col. 2, Ln. 1-9). Fields contemplates that a model can cover a plurality of business items and the Office, therefore, takes the position that this means that the model disclosed in Fields can be applied to many different business items wherein each item is covered by a model. Therefore, since Fields disclose a plurality of items that can be covered by its model it inherently discloses a plurality (including two) seller models. It is entirely possible that the two products Fields mentions in the above cited passages come from two different sellers.

(6 February 2008 Office Action, Pages 18-19). (Emphasis Added). However, Applicant initially notes, that although the Applicant agrees with the Examiner's assertion that "Fields does not teach" at least two seller models that each represent a seller for one or more products' wherein each product is associated with a 'product forecast model'", Applicant respectfully submits that the Fields references was cited for the first time in the present Office Action dated 6 February 2008, and therefore, Applicant has not previously made an argument regarding Fields. (6 February 2008 Office Action, Pages 18-19).

By contrast, the cited portion of Fields on which the Examiner relies does not disclose a "memory operable to store a hierarchy of at least two seller models that each represent a seller for one or more products, each product being associated with a product forecast model representing [....] forecasted sales of the product through the seller", as recited in independent Claim 11 but rather merely describes a "needed [...] method of adjusting [...] projected demand levels". (Column 2, Lines 1-9). (Emphasis Added). In fact, Applicant respectfully directs the Examiner's attention to the cited portion of Fields, on which the Examiner relies:

What is needed is method of adjusting the projected demand levels in future intervals in proportion to both historical demand trends and current actual demand.

(Column 2, Lines 1-9). Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner has mischaracterized the cited portion of *Fields*. For example, the Examiner states that "Fields clearly discloses two seller

models". (6 February 2008 Office Action, Page 18). However, Applicant finds no such teachings anywhere in *Fields* and certainly not in the cited columns and lines of *Fields*. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to verify the references to *Fields*, to ensure that some mistake has not been made.

In addition, the Examiner states that Fields "inherently discloses a plurality (including two) seller models". (6 February 2008 Office Action, Page 18). (Emphasis Added). Applicant respectfully disagrees and respectfully traverses the Examiner's assertions regarding the purported inherent features in Fields. Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner is using the subject Application as a template to formulate reconstructive hindsight to reach this conclusion and reconstructive hindsight is improper under 35 U.S.C. § 103. An anticipating reference, by definition, must disclose every limitation of the rejected claim in the same relationship to one another as set forth in the claim. (In re Bond, 15 U.S.P.Q.2d 1566, 1567 (Fed. Cir. 1990)). With respect to the subject Application, the Examiner acknowledges and Applicant agrees that the Fields does not disclose every limitation of independent Claim 11 in the same relationship to one another as set forth in independent Claim 11.

To the extent the Examiner relies on principles of inherency in making the anticipation rejections in the Office Action, inherency requires that the asserted proposition necessarily flow from the disclosure. (In re Oelrich, 212 U.S.P.Q. 323, 326 (C.C.P.A. 1981); Ex parte Levy, 17 U.S.P.Q.2d 1461, 1463-64 (Bd. Pat. App. & Int. 1990); Ex parte Skinner, 2 U.S.P.Q.2d 1788, 1789 (Bd. Pat. App. & Int. 1987); In re King, 231 U.S.P.Q. 136, 138 (Fed. Cir. 1986)). It is not enough that a reference could have, should have, or would have been used as the claimed invention. "The mere fact that a certain thing may result from a given set of circumstances is not sufficient." (Oelrich, at 326, quoting Hansgirg v. Kemmer, 40 U.S.P.Q. 665, 667 (C.C.P.A. 1939); In re Rijckaert, 28 U.S.P.Q.2d 1955, 1957 (Fed. Cir. 1993), quoting Oelrich, at 326; see also Skinner, at 1789). (Emphasis Added). "Inherency ... may not be established by probabilities or possibilities. The mere fact that a certain thing may result from a given set of circumstances is not sufficient." (Skinner, at 1789, citing Oelrich). (Emphasis Added). Where anticipation is found through inherency, the Office's burden of establishing prima facie anticipation includes the burden of providing "...some evidence or scientific reasoning to establish the reasonableness of the

examiner's belief that the functional limitation is an inherent characteristic of the prior art." (Skinner at 1789). (Emphasis Added).

With respect to the subject application, Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner's assertion is not supported by scientific reasoning and/or any type of evidence and appears to be the Examiner's opinions formulated using the subject Application as a template, which constitutes impermissible use of hindsight. In fact, the Examiner's statement that Fields "inherently discloses a plurality (including two) seller models", is merely a fact that a certain thing may result from a given set of circumstances and is clearly insufficient. (6 February 2008 Office Action, Page 18). (Emphasis Added).

Thus, if the Examiner continues to maintain the rejection of Claims 11-42 based on inherency, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner provide evidence or scientific reasoning to establish the reasonableness of the examiner's belief that the functional limitation is an inherent characteristic of the prior art.

The Office Action Also Acknowledges that *James* Fails to Disclose Other Limitations Recited in Applicant's Claims

Applicant respectfully submits that the Office Action acknowledges, and Applicant agrees, that Lee fails to disclose various limitations recited in independent Claim 11. Specifically the Examiner acknowledges that Lee fails to teach "pre-allocated supply of the product to the seller and the system operable to compute the amount of the product that is ATP at the seller according to the planned supply, the customer orders, the pre-allocated supply and the amount of the product that is ATP at one or more sellers at a higher level in a seller hierarchy". (6 February 2008 Office Action, Page 3). (Emphasis Added). However, the Examiner asserts that the cited portions of Rhodes disclose the acknowledged shortcomings in Lee. Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's assertions regarding the subject matter disclosed in Rhodes.

Applicants respectfully submit that Rhodes fails to disclose, teach, or suggest independent Claim 11 limitations regarding a "system operable to compute the amount of the product that is ATP at a seller according to at least the planned supply of the product, the customer orders for the product through the seller, the pre-allocated supply of the product to the seller, and the amount of the product that is ATP at one or more other sellers at a higher level in a seller hierarchy". In particular, the Examiner states:

The system of Rhodes enables a user to satisfy the current level of sales, therefore, in order to satisfy a level of sales the system of Rhodes must necessarily "compute the amount of product" otherwise how would Rhodes inform a user on how to "satisfy the current planned level of sales." The applicants argue that "the equations forming the foundation of the Examiner's comparison between Rhodes and independent Claim 11 cannot be made." It is not clear to the Office what the applicants are intending to argue from this quoted language. The Office has not cited to any equations in Rhodes in the rejection of Claim 11 and in fact the Office is citing to passages in Rhodes in the rejection of Claim 11 which teach a means to "compute the amount of product".

(6 February 2008 Office Action, Page 19). By contrast, the cited portion of Rhodes on which the Examiner relies does not disclose a "system operable to compute the amount of the product that is ATP at a seller according to at least the planned supply of the product, the customer orders for the product through the seller, the pre-allocated supply of the product to the seller, and the amount of the product that is ATP at one or more other sellers at a higher level in a seller hierarchy", as recited in independent Claim 11 but rather merely provides for the SOP process to better satisfy the current planned level of sales, but does not include, involve, or even relate to computing the amount of the product, as recited in independent Claim 11. (Page 1). (Emphasis Added). In contrast, the "computing the amount of the product" recited in independent Claim 11 is provided for compute at a seller according to at least the planned supply of the product, the customer orders for the product through the seller, the pre-allocated supply of the product to the seller, and the amount of the product that is ATP at one or more other sellers at a higher level in a seller hierarchy".

Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that the equations (i.e., the Examiner equates (i.e., equates means an equation between *Rhodes* and independent Claim 11) "comput[ing] the amount of the product" recited in independent Claim 11 with "[t]o better satisfy the current planned level of sales" disclosed in Rhodes) forming the foundation of the Examiner's comparison (i.e., comparing "comput[ing] the amount of the product" recited in independent Claim 11 with "[t]o better satisfy the current planned level of sales" disclosed in Rhodes) between *Rhodes* and

independent Claim 11 cannot be made (i.e., that is, there is simply no comparison, or equation between "comput[ing] the amount of the product" recited in independent Claim 11 and "[t]o better satisfy the current planned level of sales" disclosed in Rhodes, as purported by the Examiner). Applicant further respectfully submits that these distinctions alone are sufficient to

patentably distinguish independent Claim 11 from Rhodes (i.e., independent Claim 11 is not

anticipated by Rhodes).

The Office Action Fails to Properly Establish a *Prima Facie* case of Obvious over the Proposed *James-Fields-Rhodes-Smith* Combination According to the UPSTO Examination Guidelines

Applicant respectfully submits that the Office Action fails to properly establish a prima facie

case of obviousness based on the proposed combination of James, Fields, Rhodes, or Smith, either individually or in combination, and in particular, the Office Action fails to establish a prima facie

case of obviousness based on the "Examination Guidelines for Determining Obviousness Under 35 U.S.C. 103 in View of the Supreme Court Decision in KSR International Co. v. Teleflex Inc." (the

"Guidelines").

As reiterated by the Supreme Court in KSR International Co. v. Teleflex Inc. (KSR), the

framework for the objective analysis for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103 is stated in Graham v. John Deere Co. (383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966)). Obviousness is a question of law

based on underlying factual inquiries. These factual inquiries enunciated by the Court are as

(1) Determining the scope and content of the prior art:

(2) Ascertaining the differences between the claimed invention and the prior art; and

(3) Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.

(Notice, 72 Fed. Reg. 57527 (Oct. 10, 2007)). Objective evidence relevant to the issue of obviousness must be evaluated by Office personnel. (383 U.S. 17–18, 148 USPQ 467 (1966)). As

stated by the Supreme Court in KSR, "While the sequence of these questions might be reordered in

any particular case, the [Graham] factors continue to define the inquiry that controls." (KSR, 550

U.S. at \_\_, 82 USPQ2d at 1391).

follows:

However, it is important to note that the Guidelines require that Office personnel "ensure that the written record includes findings of fact concerning the state of the art and the teachings of the references applied. (Notice, 72 Fed. Reg. 57527 (Oct. 10, 2007)). In addition, the Guidelines remind Office personnel that the "factual findings made by Office personnel are the necessary underpinnings to establish obviousness." (id.). Further, "Office personnel must provide an explanation to support an obviousness rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103. (id.). In fact, "35 U.S.C. 132 requires that the applicant be notified of the reasons for the rejection of the claim so that he or she can decide how best to proceed" and "clearly setting forth findings of fact and the rationale(s) to support a rejection in an Office action leads to the prompt resolution of issues pertinent to patentability," (id.).

With respect to the subject application, the Office Action has not shown the factual findings necessary to establish obviousness or even an explanation to support the obviousness rejection based on the proposed combination of James, Fields, Rhodes, and Smith. The Office Action merely states that "it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to include the teachings of Fields within the James system [and] to include the features as disclosed by Rhodes within the James and Fields combination". (6 February 2008 Office Action, Pages 3-4). Applicant respectfully disagrees and respectfully submits that the Examiner's conclusory statement is not sufficient to establish the factual findings necessary to establish obviousness and is not a sufficient explanation to support the obviousness rejection based on the proposed combination of James, Fields, Rhodes, and Smith.

The Guidelines further provide guidance to Office personnel in "determining the scope and content of the prior art" such as, for example, "Office personnel must first obtain a thorough understanding of the invention disclosed and claimed in the application." (Notice, 72 Fed. Reg. 57527 (Oct. 10, 2007)). The scope of the claimed invention must be clearly determined by giving the claims the "broadest reasonable interpretation consistent with the specification." (See Phillips v. AWH Corp., 415 F.3d 1303, 1316, 75 USPQ2d 1321, 1329 (Fed. Cir. 2005) and MPEP § 2111.). In addition, the Guidelines state that any "obviousness rejection should include, either explicitly or implicitly in view of the prior art applied, an indication of the level of ordinary skill." (Notice, 72 Fed. Reg. 57528 (Oct. 10, 2007)). With respect to the subject Application, the Office Action has not provided an indication of the level of ordinary skill.

The Guidelines still further provide that once the *Graham* factual inquiries are resolved, Office personnel must determine whether the claimed invention would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art. (*Id.*). For example, the Guidelines state that *Office personnel must explain* why the difference(s) between the prior art and the claimed invention would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art. (*Id.*). In addition, the Guidelines state that the proper analysis is whether the claimed invention would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art after consideration of all the facts. (*Id.*) and See 35 U.S.C. 103(a)).

With respect to the subject Application, the Office Action has not expressly resolved any of the Graham factual inquiries to determine whether Applicant's invention would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art. In addition, the Office Action fails to explain why the difference(s) between the proposed combination of James, Fields, Rhodes, Smith and Applicant's claimed invention would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art. The Office Action merely states that "in order to provide products in timely response to customer demands" and for "allowing access to relevant data, facilitating fast decision making and providing material and resource management information to sales and marketing teams." (6 February 2008 Office Action, Pages 3-4). Applicant respectfully disagrees and further respectfully requests clarification as to how this statement explains why the difference(s) between the proposed combination of James, Fields, Rhodes, Smith and Applicant's claimed invention would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art. Applicant further respectfully submits that the Examiner is using the subject Application as a template to formulate reconstructive hindsight, which constitutes impermissible use of hindsight under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

The Guidelines yet further state that the "key to supporting any rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103 is the clear articulation of the reason(s) why the claimed invention would have been obvious." (Notice, 72 Fed. Reg. 57528 (Oct. 10, 2007)). In fact, the Supreme Court in KSR noted that "the analysis supporting a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103 should be made explicit." (id.). The Court quoting In re Kahn (441 F.3d 977, 988, 78 USPQ2d 1329, 1336 (Fed. Cir. 2006)), stated that ""[R]ejections on obviousness cannot be sustained by mere conclusory statements; instead, there must be some articulated reasoning with some rational underpinning to support the legal conclusion of obviousness." (KSR, 550 U.S. at \_\_, 82 USPQ2d at 1396). The Guidelines provide the following seven rationales:

- (A) Combining prior art elements according to known methods to yield predictable results:
- (B) Simple substitution of one known element for another to obtain predictable results:
- (C) Use of known technique to improve similar devices (methods, or products) in the same way;
- (D) Applying a known technique to a known device (method, or product) ready for improvement to yield predictable results;
- (E) "Obvious to try"—choosing from a finite number of identified, predictable solutions, with a reasonable expectation of success;
- (F) Known work in one field of endeavor may prompt variations of it for use in either the same field or a different one based on design incentives or other market forces if the variations would have been predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art:
- (G) Some teaching, suggestion, or motivation in the prior art that would have led one of ordinary skill to modify the prior art reference or to combine prior art reference teachings to arrive at the claimed invention.

Applicant respectfully submits that the Office Action fails to provide any articulation, let alone, clear articulation of the reasons why Applicant's claimed invention would have been obvious. For example, the Examiner has not adequately supported the selection and combination of James, Fields, Rhodes, and Smith to render obvious Applicant's claimed invention. The Examiner's unsupported conclusory statements that "it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to include the teachings of Fields within the James system [and] to include the features as disclosed by Rhodes within the James and Fields combination" and "in order to provide products in timely response to customer demands" and for "allowing access to relevant data, facilitating fast decision making and providing material and resource management information to sales and marketing teams", does not adequately provide clear articulation of the reasons why Applicant's claimed invention would have been obvious. (6 February 2008 Office Action, Pages 3-4). In addition, the Examiner's unsupported conclusory statement fails to meet any of the Guidelines rationales to render obvious Applicant claimed invention.

Thus, if the Examiner continues to maintain the obvious rejection based on the proposed combination of James, Fields, Rhodes, and Smith, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner provide proper support for the obviousness rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103 as necessitated by the Guidelines, including a statement by the Examiner identifying which one of

the seven rationales the Examiner is relying on and the proper analysis of that particular rationale, as required by the Guidelines.

Applicant's Claims are Patentable over the Proposed James-Fields-Rhodes-Smith Combination

Applicant respectfully submits that independent Claim 11 is considered patentably distinguishable over the proposed combination of *James*, *Fields*, *Rhodes*, or *Smith*. This being the case, independent Claims 19, 27, and 35 are also considered patentably distinguishable over the proposed combination of *James*, *Fields*, *Rhodes*, or *Smith*, for at least the reasons discussed above in connection with independent Claim 11.

Furthermore, with respect to dependent Claims 12-18, 20-26, 28-34, and 36-42; Claims 12-18 depend from independent Claim 11; Claims 20-26 depend from independent Claim 19; Claims 28-34 depend from independent Claim 29; and Claims 36-42 depend from independent Claim 35. As mentioned above, each of independent Claims 11, 19, 27, and 35 are considered patentably distinguishable over *James*, *Fields*, *Rhodes*, or *Smith*. Thus, dependent Claims 12-18, 20-26, 28-34, and 36-42 are considered to be in condition for allowance for at least the reason of depending from an allowable claim.

For at least the reasons set forth herein, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 11-42 are not rendered obvious by the proposed combination of *James*, *Fields*, *Rhodes*, or *Smith*. Applicant further respectfully submits that Claims 11-42 are in condition for allowance. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of Claims 11-42 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be reconsidered and that Claims 11-42 be allowed.

CONCLUSION:

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application is considered to be in

condition for allowance, and early reconsideration and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly

solicited

Although Applicant believes no additional fees are deemed to be necessary; the undersigned

hereby authorizes the Director to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any

overpayments, to **Deposit Account No. 500777**. If an extension of time is necessary for allowing

this Response to be timely filed, this document is to be construed as also constituting a Petition for

Extension of Time Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) to the extent necessary. Any fee required for such

Petition for Extension of Time should be charged to Deposit Account No. 500777.

Please link this application to Customer No. 53184 so that its status may be checked

via the PAIR System.

Respectfully submitted,

6 May 2008

Date

/Steven J. Laureanti/signed

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